State of Arizona
Department of Education

HNS# 13-2015

MEMORANDUM

To: Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, USDA
              Foods Program and Special Milk Program

From: Mary Szafranski, Associate Superintendent
              Arizona Department of Education, Health & Nutrition Services Division *Original Signed*

Date: May 27, 2015

RE: Preparation for Program Year 2016 (School Year 2015-2016)

The purpose of this memorandum is to communicate programmatic updates and provide useful
information about the annual application process for the National School Lunch/School
Breakfast Programs (NSLP/SBP) and USDA Foods Program, specific to School Year (SY)
2015-2016.

Important Updates

Professional Standards
The Professional Standards for State and Local School Nutrition Programs Personnel rule,
published March 2, 2015, requires a minimum amount of annual training hours for all school
nutrition program directors, managers, and staff. There are also minimum hiring standards for
school nutrition program directors. The rule is effective beginning July 1, 2015. Please visit our
new website http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/usda-professional-standards-new/ for detailed
information.

The USDA has recently released a new tracking tool to assist LEAs with the new requirements
and keep track of the training hours for all school nutrition staff. The tool and the comprehensive
user guide can be downloaded from our website at http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/usda-
professional-standards-new/.

Free and Reduced-Price Policy Statement
ADE will be releasing a new Free and Reduced-Price Policy document in the form of a template.
All LEAs will be required to review their current Free and Reduced-Price Policy statement and
submit an updated version to ADE for approval. LEAs operating the NSLP or SBP under

Provision 2, 3, Community Eligibility, or as a non-pricing program will also submit an addendum to their Free and Reduced-Price Policy. More information about the updated document and submission requirements will be provided once the template is added to our website.

Community Eligibility Provision – second year of implementation
The newest special assistance provision, Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) became available to all LEAs beginning in SY14/15. Annually, all LEAs are required to submit April 1 participant data for each site; this data was due to ADE by April 15. Based on data submitted, the site-level eligible and near-eligible notification report has been updated and posted at http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/special-assistance-provisions/.

Applications for operating the CEP must be submitted to the ADE by August 31, 2015 in order to participate in the CEP for SY15/16. LEAs intending to claim for meals served in July must have their CEP application approved and claims submitted no later than September 29, 2015. Additionally, LEAs who operated under the CEP in SY14/15 and wish to continue to operating CEP are **required** to submit the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Annual Identified Student Percentage (ISP) Form by June 30 in each year of the CEP cycle. This form is located at http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/special-assistance-provisions/ .

Funding for Equipment
Arizona will be releasing an Equipment Grant Request for Application after the start of the 2015-2016 school year. The ADE will competitively award the funds made available by USDA to school districts to purchase needed equipment, giving priority to high-need schools where 50 percent or more of the enrolled students are eligible for free or reduced price meals.

Competitive Foods/Smart Snacks
ADE issued a revision to the policy on fundraisers granting exemption from the federally required competitive food and beverage standards, commonly known as Smart Snacks Standards. Please refer to HNS 04-2015 for further guidance, on our memos page at http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/memorandum/.

Administrative Review Schedule
By June 1, 2015 all LEAs scheduled for an Administrative Review (AR) in SY15/16 will have received a notification memo. The memo included the registration link for ADE's "Director's Track: How to Prepare for Your Administrative Review"; this presentation is also available on the website at http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/the-administrative-review/. Also available on the website is the Off-site Assessment Tool and the 2015-2016 AR schedule.

Whole Grain-Rich Exemption Requests
Due to challenges LEAs have expressed with incorporating whole grain-rich products into menus, the USDA has granted authority to State agencies to review requests for whole grain-rich exemptions. LEAs interested in the exemption process must complete an exemption request form and submit it to ADE for review. The exemption request form is located at

http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/meal-pattern/. Details about the whole grain-rich exemptions can be found in USDA guidance memo SP 20-2015 and ADE guidance memo HNS 12-2015, located at http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/memorandum/.

CNP Direct Certification/Direct Verification
ADE's CNP Direct Certification/Direct Verification system has been updated. Specifically, the match results now include additional columns to indicate new types of direct certification matches. These new columns have been added to allow students participating in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) and migrant students enrolled within the Migrant Education Program (MEP) to be directly certified for free meal benefits. Similar to last year, students participating in more than one program will only be counted once in the total "Matches Found" section of the Results box *but will be counted in each of categories for type of match.* Please visit our website www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/nslp/programguidance/ to view step-by-step instructions for using the CNP Direct Certification/Direct Verification system.

Annual Notice of Application (CNP Web Site & Sponsor Applications)

Online Application Instructions
LEAs are required to submit their site and sponsor applications using CNP Web each school year. After **June 1, 2015**, online site and sponsor applications for program year 2016 (school year 2015-2016) will be available, through Common Logon, to complete and submit for approval. The annual submission and approval of the site and sponsor applications is a required step in order for LEAs to request reimbursements for meals served under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Special Milk Program (SMP), and Afterschool Care Snack Program (ASCSP).

Reminders
- A Common Logon* username and password is required to enter the CNP Web system in order to access and submit the online site and sponsor applications.
  - The Common Logon permissions request form is located at http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/nslp/operate-nlsp/how-to-apply/.
  - Please anticipate 7-10 days for ADE to process a Common Logon permissions request form.
  - The Common Logon Permissions Request Form is also used to gain access to CNP Direct Certification, Verification, and Direct Verification.
- Please allow three weeks for approval of the site and sponsor applications.
- **The site application(s) must be submitted before the sponsor application.**
- Accuracy of contact information on the site and sponsor applications is critical for the ADE to provide SFAs with program information throughout the year. Our primary method of communication will be via email sent to the person listed as the School Food Authority and Program Contact in part 1b and 2 of the Sponsor Application.
- Review the Application Checklist to ensure that all of the required documents have been submitted. **The online sponsor application in CNP Web will not be approved until all**

the "checklist items" are submitted and approved.
- LEAs contracting with a vendor, a food service management company or are a district that provides meals to schools outside of the district:
  - A new contract or renewal of the existing contract will be required prior to approval of the sponsor application. Visit http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/nslp/operate-nlsp/contracting-service/ for more information.
- LEAs adding sites to the CNP Web system:
  - Must complete and submit the Add/Change/Delete Health & Nutrition Services-Entity Data Form to ADE to add a new school to the online application. The form is located at: http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/nslp/operate-nlsp/how-to-apply/.
- LEAs with sites that have a separate Head Start/Preschool operation on their campus to which they provide and claim meals:
  - Must enter the Head Start/Preschool information as a part of the online site application for the site providing the meals (not as a separate site application in CNP Web).
  - Make sure to note the separate Head Start/Preschool operation in the point of service description section (Part 6 of the Sponsor Application).

*Note: *LEAs are responsible for keeping individual Common Logon accounts confidential, accurate and up-to-date. Consulting firms contracting with an LEA including food service management company employees, are not authorized to complete the CNP Web online application, direct certification, verification or claiming process and will not be provided with Common Logon rights to enter such data. Also, please notify ADE Health and Nutrition Services of any individuals with a Common Logon username and password who are no longer employed as the account(s) must be disabled immediately.*

Applications & Certification Documents Sent to Households

USDA developed an updated and fully revised prototype Application for Free and Reduced-Priced School Meals, in response to feedback from stakeholders. The prototype represents a notable departure from prior versions and reflects modification to existing policy. For further explanation on USDA's policy changes and design overview, please refer to SP 33-2015 on our memos page at http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/memorandum/. The ADE-approved template documents for certification and verification have been updated and are available online at http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/nslp/program-forms/. There is no requirement to utilize the ADE templates; ultimately as long as the applications/forms used are in compliance with the Eligibility Manual (Part 2: Application). If the LEA chooses to develop custom applications/forms, they will submit them to their NSLP Specialist for review, in order to ensure compliance with USDA requirements.

Reminders
- LEAs cannot accept and process application before the beginning of the Federally defined SY (July 1 through June 30).

- LEAs operating on a year-round schedule should distribute applications and base eligibility determinations on the current fiscal year income guidelines on/or after July 1.
- Approved household applications from the previous school year are only valid for the first 30 days of operation of the new school year.**

** Note: *The 30 day roll-over of eligibility does not apply to LEAs operating Provision 2 or Provision 3. LEAs that are completing their last non-base year cycle in school year 2014-2015 and starting their next base year in 2015-2016 must start the school year with all students in the paid category until a new certification can be determined. Please refer to the Provision 2 & 3 Guidance Manual for additional options and guidance at: http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/special-assistance/*

Direct Certification Notification
The LEA must notify the household about eligibility established through direct certification. ADE is providing a separate Notification of free meals for households that have been directly certified through the CNP Direct Certification matching system, agency letters or through contacts with officials such as the LEA's homeless liaison or a foster care agency. This notification letter can be found at http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/nslp/program-forms/. The notification must include the following information:
- The child is eligible for free meal benefits;
- No further application is necessary;
- If applicable, an explanation of extended eligibility and how to notify the LEA of any additional children in the household; and
- How to notify the LEA if free meal benefits for directly certified children are not wanted.

Foster Outreach Letter
The USDA has provided a sample Foster Outreach letter to better connect students in foster care with free school meals. The sample letter outlines a foster child's eligibility for school meals, how to apply for school meals if a child is not directly certified, and possible benefits for other children in the household. LEAs are strongly encouraged to distribute this letter in the beginning of the SY to aid in notifying foster parents about meal benefits for which their family may be eligible.

Please be aware that FosterEd is continuing to work with districts in Pima county in order to facilitate new models for ensuring students in foster care receive appropriate educational opportunities. The Arizona Department of Education has an agreement with the Arizona Department of Economic Security to facilitate the transfer of foster care student information to LEAs. Direct Certification match information for students in foster care remains confidential; the match result is provided to ensure the student receives free school meal benefits. The foster care match information may be shared with persons directly connected with providing education and social supports for students in foster care. ADE encourages LEAs in Pima County to work with FosterEd to develop protocols for appropriately sharing and using the Direct Certification match information **specific to students who are matched for foster care**. Districts outside of Pima County do not need to do anything with the Foster Care information at this time. As a

reminder, the Eligibility Manual for School Meals provides a prototype agreement to be used by LEAs when disclosing a student's eligibility for free meals. The manual and the agreement are located at http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/nslp/programguidance/

Training

General

ADE offers additional opportunities through trainings to learn and practice the fundamentals of the NSLP and SBP. Because trainings are offered at different intervals throughout the year, please note that web-based resources and ADE Specialists are always available for program clarification.

SFAs have requested clarification to determine if trainings are mandatory. No trainings are required for SFAs unless specifically notified by ADE. If an SFA is required to attend training, ADE will provide written notification to the SFA regarding mandatory training requirements.

This year, ADE is offering 2 levels of training: basic and advanced.
- **Basic trainings** are recommended for new employees and staff members with 1-2 years of experience with the NSLP. These trainings will provide attendees with an introduction to the topics and opportunities to practice applying the information presented.
- **Advanced trainings** are recommended for staff with 3+ years of experience with the NSLP. These trainings will be fast paced and will build on prior knowledge.

Trainings are also being offered according to the various job duties of school nutrition professionals. There will be Director's Track trainings for School Food Authority Contacts and Directors, as well as trainings for School Nutrition Employees involved in the day-to-day operations. We will also once again offer workshops to help prepare for verification and to submit the verification report. Training descriptions are provided to help you decide which trainings are most appropriate for you and your staff.

If attending training in person is difficult due to busy schedules or travel, ADE is making available a series of How-To Guides that provide a quick way to learn NSLP requirements from the convenience of your office. These guides are available on the website under Manuals, Guides, and Memos.

The current schedule for May through January is posted on the ADE Training Website: http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/nslp/training/.

New training/working Registration system- Coming Soon

Registration for all trainings and workshops scheduled in May through September will be completed in the current system at Event Registration. However, the ADE is currently planning a transition to a new event registration system that should be implemented near the start of the 2015-2016 school year. Once the new system becomes available, ADE will provide information

and revised links to access the new system and register for the workshops. All employees and staff members will need an ADEConnect account to complete the registration process. More information about this transition will be provided as it becomes available.

School Nutrition Programs (NSLP & SBP) Website

SFAs have continued to express the need for timely information. The School Nutrition Programs website has been expanded to include new information on the Administrative Review process, USDA Professional Standards, and the School Breakfast Program. Below are reminders about key content areas of the website: http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/nslp/ .

- **How-To-Guides:** How-To-Guides are a quick way to learn NSLP requirements from the convenience of your desk. ADE will make available a variety of guides on the ADE website at http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/nslp/programguidance/. Browse online to find How-To- Guides that meet your needs before registering for training.
- **Guidance Manuals:** An updated CNP Guidance Manual and Eligibility Manual for School Meal Programs will be posted at http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/nslp/programguidance/near the start of the 2015-2016 school year.
- **Memos Webpage:** Memos regarding all of the programs within Health and Nutrition Services are uploaded to the newly reformatted Memos page, http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/memorandum/. SFAs can still access past memos (ending November 2013) using the Memo Archive.

Please watch for emails from ADESchoolNutrition@azed.gov, which will provide information on new and updated program materials located on the School Nutrition Programs website. Emails are sent to the School Food Authority contact and Program contact listed on the CNP Web Sponsor application.

USDA Foods Program

All NSLP Sponsors may participate in the USDA Foods Program. Sponsors are required to pay a delivery fee for any case of USDA Foods ordered, so please keep this in mind when considering participation in the program. These delivery fees will be paid out of the existing food service budget. For more information, contact a member of the School Foods team at FDP@azed.gov or (602) 542-8700.

USDA Foods Program participation requirements:
- Select "yes" from the drop down box in the General Information section of the NSLP Sponsor Application on CNP Web.
- Log in to CNP2000 (the USDA Foods ordering website) and update the sponsor delivery locations and contact information.

Sponsors who are new to the USDA Foods Program must:
- Register for a USDA Foods Web-Based Training in order to gain access to the ordering website. To register, please go to http://www.ade.az.gov/onlineregistration/ and click on Health & Nutrition Services: Food Distribution, then find the next available class in your area and click "choose and continue" to begin registering. Training begins June 2015 for school year 2015-2016.
- Complete a Food Distribution Program Delivery Information Application and submit to the School Foods team. Complete a US Foods credit application and submit to Pam Bowers or Rose Garcia. These forms and instructions will be provided at the training.

For questions regarding this memo, please contact your School Nutrition Programs Specialist; this information is located on the NSLP CNP Web home page.

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